

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 AID-05 PC-01 CU-02
/066 W

-----051424Z 016286 /53

O R 051336Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5317

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

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LONDON FOR SEITZ

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SL

SUBJ: SIERRA LEONE ONE DAY BEFORE ELECTIONS

REF: (A) FREETOWN 1404, (B) FREETOWN 1436

1. SUMMARY: PRE-ELECTION VIOLENCE REPORTS CONTINUE TO TRICKLE
IN FROM SOUTHERN AND EASTERN PROVINCES WITH LARGE MOBILE ISU
DETACHMENT BEING SHUTTLED BETWEEN TROUBLED BO AND KENEMA
TOWNS. ARMY UNITS ARE ON FRINGES BOTH TOWNS, NOT INTERFERING
BUT APPARENTLY AVAILABLE IF ISU GETS OUT OF HAND. FIRST SLPP
NEWSPAPER HAS APPEARED. DESPITE STRONG PUBLIC STATEMENTS BOTH
SIERRA LEONE LABOR CONGRESS AND STUDENTS ARE QUIET, BUT
SPECULATION IS THAT BOTH MAY REACT EARLY NEXT WEEK AFTER
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RESULTS OF ELECTION ARE MADE PUBLIC. END SUMMARY.

2. MOST SERIOUS REPORT IS APPARENT SHOOTING OF APC CANDIDATE
IN KAILAHUN SOUTH, DR. SAMA BANYA, A WELL-KNOWN AND RESPECTED
KENEMA PHYSICIAN. BANYA WAS SHOT IN THE HEAD, HIS BROTHER
AND PERHAPS SEVERAL OTHERS KILLED, AND UNKNOWN NUMBERS WOUNDED --
PURPORTEDLY BY SLPP GROUPS. WORD IS SPREADING AROUND FREETOWN

THAT ALREADY ELECTED PARLIAMENTARIANS LED BY CABINET MEMBERS HAVE GONE ON UP COUNTRY MISSIONS, EACH HEADING A GROUP OF BETWEEN 100 AND 200 APC THUGS AND/OR ISU MEN. RUMORS ABOUND OF BOTH APC AND SLPP HAVING HAD ISU UNIFORMS MADE FOR THEIR SUPPORTERS FOR ELECTION ACTIVITY.

3. LARGE ISU CONTINGENT PREVIOUSLY STATIONED IN BO (REFTEL A) WHICH ASSISTED IN ATTACKS ON SLPP SUPPORTERS MAY 3 (REFTEL B), WAS PULLED OT OF BO SUDDENLY AFTERNOON OF MAY 4. TO DEAL WITH UNSPECIFIED TROUBLES IN KENEMA. BO NOW APPARENTLY QUIET AND RUMOR THAT RESERVOIR POISONED DISPROVEN BY LABORATORY TESTING. WATER NOW RESTORED TO TOWN.

4. TRAVELERS REPORT ROADS BEING CLOSED BY GANGS OF YOUTH FROM ONE PARTY OR THE OTHER. VILLAGERS ARE SAID TO HAVE FELLED TREES ALONG SIDE ROADS TO PREVENT PASSAGE OF OUTSIDERS SEEKING TO FOMENT TROUBLE INTO AREAS IN SOUTH AND EAST.

5. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION HAS SPREAD THE WORD THAT THE SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED UNTIL MAY 9. NEVERTHELESS ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN APPEAR TO HAVE GONE TO SCHOOL THIS MORNING. STUDENT SITDOWN STRIKE AT FOURAH BAY COLLEGE CONTINUES AND STUDENTS AT NJALA REPORTEDLY ARE LEAVING CAMPUS IN FEAR OF AN ASSAULT BY APC THUGS AND ISU.

6. FIRST ISSUE OF SLPP NEWSPAPER, "THE PEOPLE", APPEARED MAY 5. PAPER CATALOGS APC PLANS FOR VIOLENCE IN SOUTHERN AND EASTERN PROVINCES AND ASSERTS APC WILL IMPORT "IMPERSONATOR-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VOTERS" INTO FREETOWN AREA.PAPER ALSO REPEATS FOR WIDER AUDIENCE : (1) PREVIOUS ACCUSATIONS OF NOMINATION DAY ATROCITIES, (2) STATEMENT OF NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS, AND (3) SLPP LETTER TO POLICE COMMISSIONER.

7. THERE ARE REPORTS THAT PRESIDENT STEVENS ASKED MILITARY LEADERS MOMOH, KING, TARAWALLI, AND TORONKA APRIL 29 FOR STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FROM ARMY FOR APC AND GOSL. AFTER SATURDAY MEETING, LEADERS CALLED ON STEVENS SUNDAY TO TELL HIM THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE SUCH A STATEMENT. NO FURTHER DETAILS OF THIS INTERCHANGE KNOWN AT PRESENT.

8. SPECULATION IS MOUNTING AMONG INFORMED OBSERVERS THAT LABOR CONGRESS, STUDENTS, AND SLPP SUPPORTERS WILL REACT, PERHAPS VIOLENTLY, EARLY NEXT WEEK WHEN FINAL ELECTION RESULTS ARE KNOWN. THUS FAR. HOWEVER, GOVERNMENT HAS SHOWN STRONGER ARMED FORCES AND BETTER CAPABILITY TO MOVE APC SUPPORTERS FROM PLACE TO PLACE.
SAMUELS

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